

Message Text

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INR-07 AID-05 USIA-15 DODE-00 FBOE-00 L-03 SY-05 OC-05

CCO-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 OPR-02 SCCT-01 /086 W

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R 031414Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4787

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 DAMASCUS 3881

FOR NEA - ATHERTON; A/BF - WILLIAMSON; NEA/EX - CONNOLLY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AFSP, SY

SUBJ: REQUEST FOR INCREASE IN EMBASSY'S LOCAL EMPLOYEE
COMPLEMENT

REF: DEPT A-7158, SEPT 16, 1974

1. SUMMARY. IN ORDER TO SUPPORT EXPANDING US INTERESTS AND
ACTIVITIES IN SYRIA, INCLUDING SHARED ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
TO AID, USIS AND DAO, EMBASSY URGENTLY REQUIRES TWELVE
ADDITIONAL LOCAL POSITIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. AMERICAN MISSION IN DAMASCUS HAS GROWN STEADILY SINCE INITIAL
5-PERSON TEAM WAS SENT IN IN JANUARY 1974 TO REOPEN USINT.
PRESENT AMERICAN STAFF NUMBERS 34 WITH 53 DEPENDENTS.
CHANCERY HAS OVERFLOWED INTO THREE NEARBY APARTMENTS, USIS
HAS MOVED TO SITE OF FUTURE AMERICAN CENTER AND USAID IS
CONTRACTING FOR OFFICE SPACE IN ANOTHER NEARBY BUILDING.
CORE USAID STAFF OF SIX AMERICANS (ONE STILL TO ARRIVE) IS
SUPPLEMENTED BY FREQUENT TDY SPECIALISTS AND TECHNICIANS FOR
WHOM EMBASSY MUST PROVIDE HOST SERVICES. EMBASSY
NOW MAINTAINS 26 GOVT-LEASED QUARTERS, IN ADDITION TO
AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE, AND IS NEGOTIATING FOR FIVE MORE.

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3. IN THIS SITUATION, ORIGINAL LOCAL EMPLOYEE COMPLEMENT OF

35 POSITIONS, ESTABLISHED ON RECOMMENDATION OF CHIEF USINT SCOTES IN EARLY SUMMER 1974 AT TIME OF RESUMPTION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS IS NO LONGER ADEQUATE TO SUPPORT EXPANDED US INTERESTS AND ACTIVITIES IN SYRIA, INCLUDING PROVISION OF SHARED ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES TO AID, SUSI AND DAO ON EFFICIENT BASIS.

4. THE 12 POSITIONS REQUESTED BELOW REPRESENT MINIMUM NUMBER NECESSARY TO ACCOMPLISH ESSENTIAL WORK OF MISSION:

I. PROGRAM: ARABIC ENGLISH TYPIST FOR POLITICAL SECTION.

ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO SYRIAN GOVT AND MOST OTHER SYRIAN ADDRESSEES MUST HAVE ARABIC TRANSLATION. INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE MUST ALSO BE TRANSLATED AND TYPED INTO ENGLISH. VOLUME OF TYPING EXCEEDED POLITICAL SECTION CAPABILITIES SOME MONTHS AGO AND HAS REACHED LEVEL WHERE TRYING SPREAD WORKLOAD AROUND TO OTHER LOCAL SECRETARIES AND TYPISTS IS NO LONGER WORKABLE SOLUTION.

II. SHARED

(A) GSO SECRETARY. GSO SECTION IS LOCATED IN CHANCERY ANNEX. THROUGHOUT WORKING DAY, GSO MUST SPREAD HIMSELF THIN SUPERVISING ACTIVITIES IN ALL GOVT-OWNED AND LEASED QUARTERS AND HANDLING INCREASING VOLUME OF PAPERWORK ON PROCUREMENT AND OTHER GENERAL SERVICE FUNCTIONS. NEEDS SECRETARY TO ANSWER TELEPHONE CALLS AND HANDLE CORRESPONDENCE AND FILING.

(B) SUPPLY/PROCUREMENT CLERK. SUPPLY AND PROCUREMENT NOW BEING HANDLED BY ONE SR. ASST. LOCAL, ASSISTED PART-TIME BY JUNIOR CLERK TYPIST. ADDITIONAL POSITION NEEDED TO HANDLE INCREASING WORKLOAD AS POST DECREASES RELIANCE ON EMBASSY BEIRUT FOR PROCUREMENT AND TRANS-SHIPPING. AID AND USIS, WHO ARE JUST SETTING UP THEIR PERMANENT OFFICES, ARE ADDING STEADILY TO FLOW OF WORK. HELP ALSO NEEDED IN UPGRADING INVENTORY CONTROL.

(C) BUDGET AND FISCAL CLERK. WORKLOAD OF SECTION HAS INCREASED MARKEDLY WITH ESTABLISHMENT OF USIS CENTER AND AID MISSION. POSITION NEEDED PRIMARILY TO SUPPORT THESE AGENCIES' UNCLASSIFIED

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FISCAL AND ACCOUNTING REQUIREMENTS, HANDLE INCREASED FLOW OF VOUCHERS AND ALSO TO PERMIT OPENING CASHIER'S WINDOW.

(C) CARPENTER. (E) ASSISTANT CARPENTER. SINCE RESUMPTION, EMBASSY HAS NOT BEEN ABLE CONTRACT FOR SATISFACTORY CARPENTRY SERVICE DESPITE STRENUOUS EFFORTS. COSTS ARE EXHORBITANT, DELAYS UNENDING AND WORK UNSATISFACTORY. EMBASSY HAS ESTABLISHED SMALL CARPENTRY SHOP UTILIZING PART-TIME SERVICES

OF MAINTENANCE ASSISTANT AND CHAR FORCE SUPERVISOR BUT BACKLOG IS ENORMOUS WITH CARPENTRY WORK FOR CHANCERY AND ANNEXES, REHABILITATION OF OLD OFFICE FURNITURE AND OUTFITTING OF MANY GOVT-LEASED QUARTERS WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN LIVED IN BY AMERICANS BEFORE. RECURRENT ITEMS ARE CLOSETS (ARMOIRES), CABINETS AND BOOKCASES WHICH NOT PROVIDED IN DAMASCUS APARTMENTS OR IN OFFICIAL FURNITURE SETS FURNISHED BY DEPT.

(F) ELECTRICIAN/APPLIANCE REPAIRMAN. INCREASING WORKLOAD CAUSED BY RECURRING ELECTRIC OUTAGES AND EXPANDING MISSION HAVE EXCEEDED CAPABILITIES EMBASSY'S ONE LOCAL ELECTRICIAN WHOSE TIME FULLY OCCUPIED IN ANY CASE WITH MINOR ELECTRICAL REPAIRS AND MODIFICATIONS. NEED COMPETENT SUPERVISORY ELECTRICIAN/APPLIANCE REPAIRMAN TO KEEP USG-OWNED AIR CONDITIONERS, WASHERS, FREEZERS, REFRIGERATORS AND OTHER ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES IN GOOD WORKING ORDER IN CITY WITH WIDELY FLUCTUATING ELECTRIC CURRENT. CONTRACTING OUT AIR CONDITIONING REPAIRS HAS BEEN UNSATISFACTORY AND NO LOCAL REPAIR SERVICE OR SPARES EXIST FOR OTHER USG-SUPPLIED MAJOR APPLIANCES WHOSE MANUFACTURERS (WHIRLPOOL, PHILCO) ARE ON ARAB BOYCOTT LIST. WOULD PLAN DESIGNATE PRESENT EMPLOYEE ELECTRICIAN ASSISTANT.

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(G) PLUMBER. EMBASSY HAS NO QUALIFIED LOCAL PLUMBER AT PRESENT. MAJOR PLUMBING JOBS CAN BE CONTRACTED FOR, BUT DAILY SPATE OF MINOR PLUMBING REPAIRS CAN BEST BE HANDLED BY LOCAL EMPLOYEE.

(H) MASON/PLASTERER/PAINTER. EMBASSY HAS NO MASON/PLASTERER/PAINTER AT PRESENT. MAJOR JOBS CAN BE CONTRATED, BUT NUMBER OF MINOR DAILY JOBS HAS REACHED LEVEL WHERE QUALIFIED LOCAL EMPLOYEE IS REQUIRED.

(I) TWO DRIVERS. EMBASSY HAS CAREFULLY REVIEWED INCREASING DEMAND FOR MOTORPOOL SUPPORT AND FINDS THAT PRESENT COMPLEMENT OF SEVEN DRIVERS (EXCLUDING AMBASSADOR'S CHAUFFEUR) CANNOT HANDLE PRESENT AND FORESEEN WORKLOADS EVEN ON 48-HOUR WEEK PLUS SUBSTANTIAL OVERTIME. SCHEDULING MORE OVERTIME INADVISABLE FOR SAFETY REASONS. ELEMENTS OF DRIVING SCHEDULE REQUIRING MORE DRIVERS ARE:

1. PROVIDING TRANSPORTATION FOR MARINE SECURITY GUARDS WHO RECENTLY MOVED TO NEW MARINE HOUSE THREE KILOMETERS DISTANT FROM EMBASSY. AMBASSADOR HAS DETERMINED THAT GIVEN LACK OF IMMUNITY AND IN VIEW HIGHLY HAZARDOUS LOCAL DRIVING CONDITIONS, ARAB-SPEAKING DRIVER SHOULD HANDLE ALL MSG TRANSPORT, INCLUDING DAY AND NIGHT SHIFT CHANGES.

2. TO MINIMIZE RISK OF TERRORIST OR OTHER INCIDENTS,
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DEPENDENT SCHOOL CHILDREN MUST BE DRIVEN TO-AND-FROM SCHOOL MORNING, MID-DAY AND AFTERNOON.

3. TWICE-WEEKLY POUCH/COURIER TRIPS TO BEIRUT AND LESS FREQUENTLY TO AMMAN EACH TIE UP DRIVER FOR WHOLE DAY. EMBASSY HAS REDUCED THESE TRIPS TO MINIMUM BUT CANNOT DISPENSE WITH THEM. EMBASSY TRUCK, WHEN ENTRY FORMALITIES COMPLETED, WILL ALSO MAKE FREQUENT RUNS TO BEIRUT AND LATAKIA PORTS IN ORDER TO CUT DOWN ON LONG DELAYS ENCOUNTERED IN USE OF COMMERCIAL TRUCKING.

4. INCREASING NUMBER OF OFFICIAL VISITORS REQUIRING TRANSPORTATION SUPPORT.

5. AMBASSADOR REQUIRES ASSIGNED DRIVER SUNDAYS WHEN HIS ASSIGNED DRIVER IS OFF.

(J) MECHANIC/GAS PUMP ATTENDANT. GIVEN DISTANCE AND DELAYS INVOLVED IN UTILIZING OVERCROWDED LOCAL GAS STATIONS AND FOR EMERGENCY SITUATIONS, EMBASSY NOW IN PROCESS OF REHABILITATING UNDERGROUND GAS TANK, PUMP AND ONE-STALL MECHANIC'S GARAGE ON CHANCERY GROUNDS. OPERATION WILL REQUIRE ONE MECHANIC/PUMP ATTENDANT TO PERFORM LIGHT MAINTENANCE/SERVICING FOR OFFICIAL VEHICLES AND DISPENSE GASOLINE. HEAVY MAINTENANCE WILL CONTINUE TO BE CONTRACTED.

4. CONCLUSION. FOREGOING REQUEST FOR 12 LOCAL POSITIONS HAS BEEN CAREFULLY CONSIDERED BY AMBASSADOR AND AGENCY HEADS AND REPRESENTS MINIMUM NECESSARY FOR EMBASSY TO MEET ITS CURRENT REQUIREMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SHARED SUPPORT. RAPID APPROVAL IS REQUESTED.
MURPHY

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